

Anthrax worries nation, campus

By Tom Clark
Old Gold and Black Reporter

The United States has been startled by recent anthrax infections, most notably in the cases of contaminated mail sent to NBC news anchor Tom Brokaw and Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle, leaving approximately 40 people infected and one dead.

While government officials, medical experts and the media discuss the danger of an anthrax outbreak, university officials are discussing how the disease could potentially affect the campus and local community.

University Police, Environmental and Safety Affairs, the university legal counsel, the vice president of student affairs, Student Health Services, the post office and Human Resources are working together to ensure student safety and are taking precautions against the threat of anthrax.

"We've been communicating and recently had some phone calls and inquiries from concerned faculty, staff and students," University Police Chief Regina Lawson said.

An advisory to students and faculty was issued Oct. 16, citing the same universal precautions as national institutions.

Students are urged to be cautious of what they receive in the mail. "If anything does occur suspicious or in question ... the student should first call 911 and then we would coordinate the proper authorities," Lawson said.

According to Allen Johnson, an assistant professor of biology, the anthrax cases do not appear to be indicative of a widespread terrorist plot.

"The worst way to spread the disease

"The terrorists are doing more with fear than they are with actual anthrax."

Dave Hanson
Freshman

is through the mail" Johnson said. "Whoever is responsible is clearly attacking individuals, and this is not a large-scale act of terrorism." If a case were to appear on campus, the existing safeguards would be more than sufficient to keep the students safe from the disease spreading.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, bacillus anthracis is an acute infectious disease caused by a spore-forming bacterium and most commonly occurs in grazing animals.

Humans are normally infected with anthrax by being exposed to dead animals or animal products, but the disease has recently been spread as a white, powdery substance dusted on letters and packages received through the mail.

The bacteria can be contracted through skin contact, inhalation and intestinally from consuming infected meat. Patients have varying symptoms, but they generally resemble the flu or common cold. Skin lesions usually accompany anthrax contracted externally. If not properly treated, patients tend to get violently ill as the disease progresses, and many die within a short period of time.

The CDC says anthrax is not contagious, and person-to-person spread of the disease is highly unlikely. Antibiotics can effectively treat anthrax, but only if initiated early. The best way to prevent contracting anthrax is just to be aware of the possible dangers of the disease. Also,

a vaccine has been licensed for use in humans, and is reported to be 93 percent effective.

"With these cases being so widespread, we obviously have to do something about it," freshman Sean Dolan said. "I can't tell you what, but something. We just have to take precautions."

Some students, however, are not as worried about the actual bacteria or the possibility of an outbreak.

"The terrorists are doing more with fear than they are with actual anthrax," freshman Dave Hanson said.

The Reynolda Station post office is also working to protect the campus from any possible threat of an anthrax case.

"One thing we are doing is going over the characteristics of suspicious packages with all our employees," Connie Lawson, the director of the university mail center said. "Mail clerks are wearing protective gloves, which aren't mandatory, but they are here to be used if the clerks want them."

If any anthrax cases were to appear on campus, Student Health Services would respond. In the occurrence of a confirmed medical case of anthrax, a number of local and federal authorities would then be involved.

Local authorities, especially the Forsyth County Health Department, are working to maintain communication with citizens, as well as prepare themselves for any possibility.

"We are trying to be prepared on how to identify and deal with a situation like those that have occurred in Florida, New York and Washington, D.C.," Tim Monroe, the director of the Health Department, said. "We met to decide what to do in case of an emergency and how to minimize risk."

sity she did custodial work in the Davis and Johnson dorms.

Senior Jonathan Piper lived in Johnson when Malloy worked there. "She was probably one of the nicest people in Johnson our freshman year," he said.

Malloy thinks the students at the university are "sweet," and that the hardest part of her job is getting used to the students and then having to let them go.

"You just learn to love them and then they disappear out into the world," she said. "It's not that they (the students) aren't ladies and gentlemen yet, they just have

a little learning about life to do."

Outside of work, Malloy is active in her church. She helps by gathering donations and gifts for the Women's Shelter and collecting food contributions.

Helen will be 59 in December and plans on working at the university until her retirement.

"Everyone here is so sweet," Malloy said, "Now I'm getting older and this is such a nice place to be working," she said. "My type of work isn't the type everyone would like to do, but I'm proud of it and I'm not ashamed to be called a custodian."

Malloy

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Management, met Malloy when she came to the university in 1995. "Helen has a great attitude, her character is warm and she is very friendly," he said. "She's a real short lady, but when she smiles I swear it looks like she is six feet tall."

When Malloy first came to the univer-



Billie Zito/Old Gold and Black

Twist and shout

Sophomore Shannon Hixon dances with a member of the Winston-Salem community during the Fall Ball Oct. 17. The ball is an annual party sponsored by CARE for the mentally disabled in the community.

SG

Student Government meets at 7 p.m. Tuesdays. Executive officers may be reached at Ext. 5293 or Box 7292.

Appropriations and Charter

The Appropriations and Charter Committee considered two new organizations, Living Parables and Unified Rhythms, for budget allocations.

Public Relations

The Public Relations Committee is currently planning a town hall forum set for 6 p.m. Oct. 24 in Reynolds Gymnasium.

The committee also discussed publicizing campus security issues and is continuing the WAKE TV show, "Voice of the Deacons."

Physical Planning

The Physical Planning Committee will be asking for signatures on petitions for a climbing wall and a shelter

on Water Tower Field.

The committee also discussed making rental wireless cards in the library available for students that cannot find Ethernet plug-ins.

The committee is also working with SEAC to try to increase recycling in bathrooms and the Benson University Center.

The committee is still looking at drainage problems around campus.

Academics

The Academic Committee is focusing efforts on a leadership minor as well as establishing a Web site on which each academic department will post information to help freshmen advisers guide students.

The site will include information on major and minor requirements, contact names for questions, suggestions for schedules, contact names of student advisors and a page on course suggestions for students wanting to study abroad.



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